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SUBJECT: EMBASSY MINSK WEEKLY POL/ECON REPORT - NOVEMBER 24,  
2006

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\* Missing Section 001 \*  
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MINSK 11291226 002 OF 003

Ministers /f the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)  
confened a session in Minsk. Represeltatives &rom the 12 CIS  
member countries heard a report on ways to increase the  
efficiency of CIS' activities and decided to set Qp an interstate  
commission of deputy foreign -inisters to continue studying the  
CIS' operation and generate proposals for refgrm. The Ministers  
also discussed draft agreements on the basic principles of  
cooPeration in the field ofmigration and the Anti-Terrorist  
Cenher.

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CIVIL SOCIETY  
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#### [16.](#) Opposition Leader Detained in Fatal Car Accident Case

On November 24, indepeNdent media reported that oppksitimn leader  
and former ppresident!!! candidate Aleksandr Milinkevich had been  
detained over his alleged involvement in a fatal car accident.  
Police claimedthat his car resembled the one that had fled th  
scene of a previous !ccident in which one person had died.  
Milinkevich'S press secretary told post that the detention  
occurred in the northern region od Vitebsk.

#### [17.](#) Border Officials Convicted of Bribery

On November 21, nearly 50 former border guards and customs  
officers were sent to prison for bribery, according to the  
Belarusian Military Prosecutor's Office. The Belarusian Military  
Court sentenced a border control unit's former head and 13  
servicemen, five officers of the Oshmyany Customhouse and two  
civi,lans to between five and 14 iears in prison for accepting  
bribes to let trucks cross the Lithuanian border into Belarus  
without paying import duties. The Kotlovka checkpoint had 27  
inspection officers who were also given prison terms varying  
between six and a half and seven years for allowing some 600  
trucks carrying food, h/usehold appliances XQQther goods to  
cross the border without paying duties between 2002 and 2004.

#### [18.](#) Date Set for Dashkevich's Sentence Appeal Hearing

On No6ember 23, independent m&dia reported that on December 15 a  
Minsk City Court judge is scheduled to examine an appeal from the  
defenge team of imprisoned Dmitriy (Zmitser) Dashkeviah, age 25,  
against hiq conviction and jailing. Dashkevich 7as sentenced to  
18 months in a minimum-security correctional institution on  
November 1 after (aving been found guilty of running an  
unregistered orgajization (Malady Front).

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TRADE AND INVESTMENT  
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#### [19.](#) Belarus' Trade with Rusq-ia up 30.7 pJrcent

On November 22X the Economics Ministryreported that Belarus'  
trade with Russia rose by30.7 percent compred with last year.  
Blarus' exports so far tis y&ar totaled USD 4.9billion and  
imports UD 9.8 billion. Rusqia accounts for 87.4 percent of  
Belarus' trade with the Commonwealth of Idependent States, which  
experienced a 30.4 percent increase to USD 169 billion. Belarus  
boosted trade with Kazakhstan y 60.4 pebcent to USD 27.1  
million. Belarus' trade withd Mohdova ros by 5.6 percent to USD  
125.1 million, with exports exceeding imports y USD 13.  
malliol. Trade withUkraine totaled USD 1.7 billion sk fa in  
2006, a 28.5-percnt rise, 7ith an export surpluf of USD 2.3  
million.

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DOMESTIC ECONOMY  
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#### [110.](#) Monetary Policy tm Hold Inflation Below Eight Percnt

On November 21 Pytr P2okopovich, head of the National Bank of  
elarus, promised Presidnt Lukashenko `hat the country's 2007Q  
monetary policy will be aimed at decelerading inflapionand  
stabilizang the national cubrenci's exchange rte. According toQ-}}|-}-y~%-5A=Y%Q!1 the i.flation rate should not exceed eight percent  
"y the end of Q007. He added that the National Bank's Base  
Refinance Rate is expected to be lowered to seven to nineQ  
peraent, which will help reduce an averagE interest rate on loans  
to 10 to 12 percent.

#### [11&](#) Unemployment in Belarqs Down 25.2 p&rcent

On Notember 22, the Ministry mf Statistics and Analysis reported  
That the number of officially regiqtered unemployed people in  
Belarus decreased 25.2 percent compared to last year's numbers.  
The Ministry has reGistered 51,000 unemployEd as of the end of

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\* Missing Section 003 \*  
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